

.,Tape 399      Jessie Neumeyer

29 April 2006

Transcribed by Ellen S.Kiever

Corrections made by Marsha P. Oleen 28 July 2006

This interview is transcribed on a tape given to us by Marsha Phillips Oleen, a granddaughter of Jessie Neumeyer. The tape starts after the interview has begun. The interviewer was Jessie's son Willis Neumeyer about 1960.

Margaret Jessie Wall Neumeyer was born 12 Jan 1893 in Leadville, Colorado. Her parents were Archibald and Mary Jane Lampshire Wall. Mary Jane divorced Archibald and married James Taylor in 1902. He had two children prior, Emma and Frank. There were no other children born to this union.

Jessie: We lived in Leadville, Colorado till' I was about six years old. Now my mother and father had a little bit of trouble. We stayed with our grandmother Lamsphire quite a long time. Then when I was about seven years old, mother came to Utah. Ethel, that is my sister, and I stayed with my dad and Don, my brother, went with mother. I only had one brother. Then when I was about nine years old, my mother come back to get Ethel and I. Through the divorce she got us. I would have went with my father but I was to young so I had to go with mother. We moved to Vernal, Utah. We didn't have anything. When our good clothes that we had, and our trunk and all our keepsakes was traded for an ol' wore out stove that wasn't worth a hoot. So mother traded our trunk and our clothes to some of dads relation, (Searle's) for that old worn out stove. We used a box for a table and we never had any chairs.

Willis: How old were you when you went to Vernal?

Jessie: I was nine years old.

Willis: Was grandma and grandpa married at that time?

Jessie: They were married. Mother and Dad were married at that time. He had two children and mother had the three of us, three girls and two boys. We stayed there in Vernal and moved back and forth from Grand Junction to Vernal and never did have anything. We ate dried apples and dried beans the biggest part of the time. We always had plenty of bread. Sometimes potatoes and sometimes not. Very little meat, and that is why I never cared for dried apples or beans. Then when I was about the age of twelve we moved to Myton, no it was before that, I was maybe eleven. We come out there on the Moffat Canal. That is where I first got acquainted with my future husband. He always just teased me to death. I could have killed him. Then we moved to Myton and he still was there and boarded with us. We run the hotel and he [Dad-Fred] boarded with us. Then we moved to Dragon when I was about thirteen. He was working in Dragon then. If fact, he was with us all the time. He boarded with mother practically all the time from the time I was about eleven years

old. I never thought very much of him. That is you know, in any way, only that he teased me and I didn't like him for that reason. He and another fellow there, they always teased me too. They always would tell me that I was a cute little ol' vixen.

Willis: How old was Papa when you moved to Myton? Was he working there?

Jessie: He was working at Myton when we moved there. He was big. He was nine years and a half, pret- near ten years older than I was. He worked and stayed with us and boarded with Mother and Dad all the time. Whenever he could he was with us.

Willis: Was he out there? Was he out there when you drewed that number for that place out there?

Jessie: No, when he was twenty-one, he was in Phoenix, Arizona. He drewed a number. Drewed the allotment but I ain't got to that yet. Should just give a little more and then come to that. I was about I guess about fifteen and a half when I started goin' with Fred Neumeyer. That turned out to be my husband, maybe a little younger. When I was sixteen, I lacked eight days of being sixteen, and Fred was nine years and a half older than I was, we got married. We got married in Grand Junction, Colorado. We stayed with Grandpa Lampshire. Grandpa Lampshire took us into his bedside and told us. He took Fred by one hand and me by the other and he said, "I want to give you a little bit of advice, I want you to keep it with you always. You'll get along alright if you both never get mad at the same time. If one gets mad, the other don't get mad and just keep quiet." Well, he talked to us for a long time. Told us we would have to make the law of sacrifice in this life. He knew we would and we did. When we got married we lived there at Dragon a little over six months. Our first baby was born. He was born pre-mature. He wasn't a matured baby but he actually did live and breath. Which was something that one baby in history at that time that had ever lived at all, for as young as he was and how old he was. We buried that baby in Dragon. We gave him a name because Fred wanted to. Fred wanted him named after him and his dad, George Hamilton Neumeyer. This baby was born 5 May 1909.

Anyhow, there was some other folks there, we decided we would come over on the reservation. It was the middle of July, July the nineteenth, we'd come over to the reservation where he had drewed his place in the drawing when the reservation opened in 1905. We came over there to live. We didn't have anything except a wash tub, a few dishes, four horses and two wagons and our bedding. We didn't have very much. We made our home there. We went and sit down on a hill where Fred was going to pitch a tent. We lived in a tent for a few days, for maybe a week. They was lots and lots of scorpions right there on that hill. That was my first time that I had ever had one on me. I had seen them and killed them but I had never had one on me. I would sit down on the log to watch Fred cut wood and there was three or four crawled up my neck. I really wasn't scared because I didn't think they would hurt me, which they didn't. Fred drewed this allotment in the opening of the reservation in the year of 1905. He had a little old house which he had built. We come over in 1909 but we drewed the place in 1905. It had just one room. It was up there between a half and three-quarter mile from where we now

live. We went up there and put our four horses up there on this house and pulled it down home. He drove one team and I drove the other. Course we were just doin' it then. We thought we were anyhow. We didn't have anything. Neighbors was all awful good. They kept us in vegetables and they give us vegetables cause everybody had a garden. I was scared to death of the Indians. I was afraid the Indians would get me if they even looked at me. Well the Indians didn't bother me at all. They would come around the house and ride around it and want cake or pie or something to eat. I had a little ol' dog named Jack. I had a .22, which I have learned to shoot as good as anybody. I could just knock a rabbit in the eye as good as the next guy. Many a night I sat in that little ol' one room with that gun across my knees. Scared to death to go to bed, scared to death to go to sleep but the Indians never did bother me. They would come and laugh, "Fred Neumeyer's squaw, Fred Neumeyer's squaw." Fred got to work then on the bailer. He was working on the bailer about ten to twelve miles up above where we now live, bailing hay. He bought me a little pony. I called him Bogus cause he didn't look like he was any good but he was sure a good little ol' pony. It was my first horse. I'd bake him[Fred] bread and cake. I would take it up to him and then I would stay all night and come back the next morning. One time I was quite late, well in fact, I was going to school at Lapoint. I took the seventh and eighth grade over because the school was right close to me. So after school, I would to go where Fred was, ridin' the pony up there and then I would come back early in the morning. I started up there one night and my bread was quite warm, I was late gettin' it fixed. I tied it on my saddle and I had a five gallon can that I packed it in. I tied it on and when I got part way through the field the pony throwed me head over hills, bread and everything else. Well, he throwed me a couple more times before I got up about four miles from home, well maybe more than that probably eight miles away from home, Fred had moved close to home about two or three miles and I thought I could easily find him when the horse throwed me the last time in the fence. My face was all scratched. I got off and took my bread and started up through the trees to where his camp was. It was right in the edge of a lateral, a ditch, I thought all I have to do is follow this ditch and I will get there. It was dark, I headed up there and there was Indians camped along the way. There was the dogs barking and I was scared plumb to death, that is all there was to it. When I got up there his camp was gone. There was nobody there. Well, I was about as scared kid as ever lived. I throwed my bread and everything away and headed down the ditch again. Every step I hollered "Fred." Well I went about a half a mile or maybe a little further when a great big ol' Indian stepped out of the bushes. I was so scared I just stood and looked. He come over and took me by the hand. He said, "What's the matter? You scared. Why didn't you come to the Indian camp? We would have took you to Fred. We know Fred Neumeyer and Fred Neumeyer's squaw." I still couldn't talk. He took me by the hand and he sang all the way. We went about a half a mile when Fred come out of the bushes because he heard me. This Indian never let loose of my hand. He put my hand in Fred's hand and then he left and he told Fred, "Your squaw, she scared of Indians. Indians don't hurt her." Then he rubbed his hands all over his face where mine was a bleedin' cause I had scratched mine. Everytime we would see that Indian he would laugh and say, "White squaw, she scared of Indian and he would rub his face. Well, he got to be an awful good friend of ours. The Indians were grand. We had some of the best Indian friends that ever was, Ol' Watermelon Janie and Ol' Jim Crowbow. At first we got our

mail at Whiterocks. That was about seven or eight miles from our place. We would ride there horseback. I would take it pretty slow til' I got to the river and then where the Indians was. From the river I would run the ol' horse as fast as he would go till I got to Whiterocks. Well, in the year of 1911, our first boy was born, Earl. He was a big baby and we didn't have any doctors in the country to speak of. We did have a government doctor. He wasn't allowed to take care of white people unless it was an absolute necessity. If it had been, they figured in confinement why you could just get anyone to take care of you. Well after Earl was born, Earl was a big baby and was born at Myton. The doctor we had with him wasn't a doctor. He was supposed to have been born two weeks before he was and I went on over two weeks. I thought I was goin' to die. I don't know why I didn't. He had an awful time for him bein' born. No chloroform or nothing was given. Well the doctor pulled on the head and mother pulled on me and we finally give birth to Earl. I said I still feel it and see it but that is the way Earl was born. His head was pulled out of shape and I thought he never would go back but he did. He weighed ten pounds and eleven ounces. He was half grown when he was born. I weighed 104 pounds. We went back up home with him. He got along fine. He was a croupy baby. He always had the croup. He did get along fine and he was as big as I was. I never lifted him and never carried him. I just sat down to the side of him and gave him his dinner. In 1913 we had a baby girl born. She wasn't as big as your fist. She weighed about seven pounds. She was a cute little ol' thing, little ol' white headed baby. At that time I didn't have a doctor. I had an Indian women come and take care of me. Then the doctor, Doctor Lloyd, from Fort Duchesne come to see that everything was alright. He was awful good to me. He was just like a father anyway. We got along okay. I peddled pies and cakes and meat and eggs. Made cheese for the Indians to buy our groceries cause we never had any money. If we ever went to a celebration, the only money we did have was with Fred runnin' a foot race and he'd always win. We always had plenty that way. He could make it that way. He liked to play ball. It wasn't anything for us to go there. We went to lots of base ball games, to Myton and Vernal. Myton was about thirty miles from home. Vernal was about twenty-three miles from home. Well, there is where we would go for our celebrations or just right down on the river. Anyhow, when Mae was about two years-old we had baby boy born and at that time he was just a little tiny baby, too. Don, a seven pound baby and May and Earl was bound that we was going to call him Old Man Sammy, well they did for a long time. They called him Old Man Sammy. When Don was about a year old, well he wasn't a year old, I had a miscarriage. Well, I got along pretty good from that one. Doctor Lloyd took pretty good care of me. Then when Don was a year old, well he wasn't a year old. He would have been a year old in January. I got pregnant again, but it died or something happened. Well they had to take it and I was awful sick and they brought me to a old horse doctor in Myton that did not know very much either. I got along fine. From then on I could not seem to get any health and wasn't well or anything. When Don was about a year and a half old, then I just about died that time. I lost the baby. I got along pretty good, still didn't have no health. I still peddled to the Indians to buy something to eat for a few clothes. We didn't have very many, we didn't have very much. We had two or three cows that took all cash to pay our taxes, buy a few things that we really had to have. We did have four horses. We finally sold two of them and got a couple of milk cows. Well, Don and them they went to school. They had to go horse

back. They rode about four miles into Lapoint. They all rode horse back to Lapoint. When Earl and May started out, I would take Earl up for the first half of the day and take Earl back and then take May up for the other half. Well, I did that for quite a long time until some neighbors moved in there and their girl took the buggy and the kids could all go in the buggy. Then when Don got old enough I drove the school bus to Lapoint. Drove the team and wagon all winter long, never was late, snow, blizzards and everything else. Kids were all grand. I think we had about nineteen children in the school wagon. We fixed seats in it and the coal oil stove to keep them warm. I would take the kids up and let them off and then I'd ride my horse back home then I would go up and get the kids when school was out. Helped Fred with the farm, I would plow and harrow, haul hay, pitched hay, pitched grain. I don't know of anything I haven't done and I liked it all. I enjoyed it. I worked right with him, side by side. Then when Don was about four years old, no he was about three, Fred's brother got killed and we went to Oklahoma for his funeral. When we got down there my health just seemed to change. I just got better right away. My heart was better, I never took any more heart medicine nor nothing, just got along fine. When we come back home I had good health. In fact, I've had good health ever since. When Don was about eight and one-half years old, we had another boy born, that was in 1922. His name was Willis, we were crazy over him cause we hadn't had a baby for so long. We thought he was somethin'. I got along okay but I did have to sit with my feet up all the time. I couldn't get around and do my work. Anyhow, we got our boy. Then in two years more we had another girl born, Orbie. We were really thrilled. They were just like twins. In fact, the one was just about like the other one. Willis was so wild over that little girl. He thought that she was it. When Orbie, well we were gettin' along fine though considering we were well to do. We had all we wanted to eat and plenty to buy all our clothes with. Fred and I both had good health. We had plenty of trouble to. We got along fine. We had in four years another little girl was born, Freda Jean. She wasn't as big as a minute, black haired and black eyed. Orbie and Willis was bound and they were all going to call her Santa Clause and then they called her little Fred, so we gave her the name of Freda cause they had to have her name Fred. When she was about three years old, our last boy was born, Jim. Well, he was a great big husky kid. We were proud of all of them. We sure had a nice family. All healthy except for Freda, she was a boob. There was always something wrong with her. She had whooping cough for a long time. She was quite bad [with that]. Where do I go now? We got all of them practically through high school. They all married off. All of them have nice families of their own now which we are very proud of.

Willis: How many grand children do you have?

Jessie: I have eleven little grandchildren, eleven darlings. Don never did get married. Don always been home with us to look after things. He seemed like, well they all went in the war, Earl, Don, Willis, and Jim. Don was in it. He was in twenty-eight months. In the firing line. He was in it five years. I guess it spoiled his life. I don't know because he has never married. He don't care for the girls at all, none of them. In the year, of 1957 I lost Fred. Wasn't it 1957?

Willis: 1958.

Jessie: The year of 1958. Now I'm alone with Don. I don't know how it will turn out. I got the best kids that ever breathed. We have a good home. I have plenty to keep me, you don't have to worry about me and I will never have to depend on nobody. Fred left me well to do. When his dad was a boy he didn't have very much either. He had a hard life too. He come into Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Strip. Never had much, him and his brother used to haul logs or somethin' for a livin.'

They never had much to eat. When we went to Oklahoma, I should have told a little bit about it, that was the only time that we ever come, or had a real fight. His folks never wanted the kids to eat. They didn't need to eat they didn't think. They didn't need nothin'. They thought if they had a biscuit or a slice of bread or potato, the kids was full. Well we've never had very much to eat but mine they always had all they could eat. Well one day at dinner, we was goin' to sit down to the table to eat and I had Earl and May and then one of his sister's girls, Maude May and I didn't care if they waited because they waited because they were big but Don was tiny and he wasn't as big as your fist anyway, he wanted to eat with me and I fixed the dinner, cooked it, set him a plate, set him down to the table and his folks didn't want him to eat. They said, "No, that he could wait with the kids." I said, "Alright, I'll wait too." So I got up and started to bawl, course I was mad. That was the first thing I did when I got mad is bawl. Anyhow, when Dad seen the way I was he got up and he said, "Well I'll tell ya, as long as Jess does the cookin', the kids are going to eat and if she wants Don to eat then he is goin' to eat. I don't want to hear no more of it." He told me afterwards, he said that was the first time in his life that he ever seen anyone's words come back to him so plain as Grandpa's did, Grandpa Lampshire. I just blubbered away to the whole outfit cause I just told em' what I thought of em'. I told them that as long as my kids was there, they were going to eat, I was mad. He said grandpa's words come back to him and he said, "Now don't you get mad. You stay behind her. Dad said he could hear grandpa say that just as plain as if he sit there. I guess that there's been hundreds of times that has come to both of us. That is the best advice for any young married people. Never get mad together. Always hold your temper. If there is anyway in the world turn and walk away if you can't do nothing else. That is what my dying grandfather told us. I never hear him or grandma ever have a word in their life. They only raised eighteen children. That's what they raised. It stayed with Dad too. Very seldom we ever got mad together. If we ever did, one of us would shut up. Well I think that is about all of it. It wasn't easy. It was a hard ol' life. We never had anything. I had to make all my own clothes. Nobody to show me nothin'. They used to be terrible and then the women would tell me how nice they looked, how well I'd done, ya know. I learnt to do my own cookin' all by myself because I was ashamed to ask anybody. Learnt to do my own sewin', I guess that's the reason why I stir up things because I never did have a cook book or nothin' like that. We still got our home. I expect to still have it as long as I've got my one boy there at home. I'll be there to take care of him and he'll be there to take care of me. We both need each other. I think that's all. I will say this. (Crying) There never was a man that was as good to a woman, for almost fifty years, as Fred Neumeyer was to me. I doubt if there ever was a man that would take a young girl like I was that didn't know nothing, and he did, and be the husband, father and a friend and everything. He always did. Don't think I didn't make a lot of mistakes, because I did.

I would just like to add this little bit. It happened when I had my three little children. They were all little and Fred was takin' care of em' while I went to Whiterocks after the mail and groceries. Well the river was quite high, I was ridin' one of the work horses, we called him Ol' John. He was a great big ol' long legged horse, stout and strong, I got on him and went after my mail. When I got to the river, like I always did, I went as fast as ol' John would take me. When I went to go back home, I got my groceries and was headed for home and got back to the river and believe it or not, there was the Indians lined up on my side of the river. Well, they would not let me cross. They said if I went across there I would drown. My horse would go drown cause the river was high. It was along in July. Anyhow, I told them that the horse could carry me across there cause he was big, he was long legged. The water did come up past my stirrups. I sat up in the saddle to cross the water. They would not leave me. They made me go down around by Fort Duchesne, which was a good twenty miles to Fort Duchesne and back home. I absolutely had to ride that way to go home. When I got home it was way after sundown and Fred was scared to death and he couldn't leave the little kids cause there was nobody to take care of em'. When I got home and told him he said, "Well, just remember that the Indians done this for you and for me."

Fred Neumeyer was born to George and Florence Abrill Neumeyer in Indiana in the year of 1883. Then when he was a small boy they moved and made the run to what they called Cherokee Creek in Oklahoma. He was one of seven children born to his mother and father. There was four boys and three girls. Grandpa Newmeyer was one of the first ones there to Cherokee Creek. He had a good team and good horses. They got them a farm there but it seems like they never did have nothin'. It seemed like that it just wasn't for them to ever get ahead very much which they never did. Dad and his older brother, Earl, hauled timber from telephone poles and timber back in the Cherokee Strip to make their livin'. Well, Grandpa Neumeyer got him a bunch of cows but I don't know what he ever did with em. I don't believe they ever kept em' very long. When dad was about, well he was twenty, him and Earl came to Phoenix, Arizona. In Phoenix is where he filed on the place in the Uinta Basin. That's where he came. That's where he made his home. He worked around and done what ever he could. Every year he had to go back home, he had to go back to his filing and live for so long. They would have taken it away from him. One time he did just about lose it because he didn't go back in six months. That was just before we were married a while. There was another fellow jumped his claim and he had a big law suit on his hands for two or three years. The government finally gave it to him. The government claimed there was a big lot of coal on it and he had quite a time even filing on it. That was after we were married. About six or seven years after he had filed on it. They finally decided it belonged to Fred Neumeyer. Fred Neumeyer worked and worked, took care of his family and raised a good size family, had seven children, four boys and three girls besides raisin' his wife, which he had to do. That there is just about it. He raised us all and I think he done a pretty good job of it. At this time, he only had two sisters livin. His mother and father are dead. Dad was the only boy livin till he passed away on the 17 June 1958. He still has two sisters livin. Mary and Stella. They are both pretty well to do I guess. He was a man that was well thought of. When the fellow come to see me about gettin' his tombstone, the man that takes care of the grave yard told him,

“This is one man that Roosevelt can be proud to have in their graveyard because he was a man that was well honored, had a good name, the limit. There was nothing that nobody wouldn’t do for him. I don’t know what nationality his folks was. His father and mother came right from England to here. Grandpa was English. I never did know what Grandma Neumeyer was but she was one of the sweetest grand little old souls that ever breathed. One of the best mother-in-laws that a woman ever had. Grandma Neumeyer’s maiden name was Averill. I don’t think there is a one of her children that knows anything of her history whatever. Grandpa Neumeyer’s folks came right from England. They were both red-headed as could be. When we had our one boy Willis, he was quite reddish, grandpa used to tease me and tell me the bishop had been up to see me. He would tell grandma that and it would make her so mad. She would say, “Well just remember, she has just a good right to have a red-headed baby as anyone livin’.” This grandfather and grandmother was bright redheaded. I don’t know why they didn’t find out anymore before she passed away because she was a little ol’ sweet dark complected woman. Mother’s folks came from England. Father’s from Scotland. We have the English, Irish, and Scot’s blood in us to the bone. Some Spanish somewhere along the line. It might be French. Grandma Lampshire told me somewhere along the line. I am proud of all my line. I got little swiss grandchildren. A little boy and a little girl. Turn it off. I will say this I am so proud of my whole family. Everyone of them, I have the best son-in-laws and daughter-in-laws. Everyone.